

CAPPADOCIAN THOUGHT AS A COHERENT SYSTEM

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THOUGH everyone recognizes the agreement of thought among the three great Cappadocians, not enough explicit attention has as yet been given to the real coherence of their doctrinal system. In recent years Gregory of Nyssa, rather than Basil or Gregory of Nazianzus, has been the center of research and interest: in fact many of the recent books on Gregory of Nyssa do scant justice to Basil or Gregory of Nazianzus and sometimes give the impression that Gregory of Nyssa originated ideas that he certainly got from his great brother and friend.¹ It is true that Gregory of Nyssa was far more concerned than Basil or Gregory of Nazianzus with building a coherent system of thought: his was a philosophical mind — probably the greatest among Christian theologians after Origen — and he appreciated, as Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus did not, the real philosophical significance of the great issues at stake. But it is also true that Gregory of Nyssa, as the youngest and last of the Cappadocians, inherited the great bulk of his ideas and problems from his two predecessors. He did not think of himself as an originator so much as a faithful disciple.² In one respect he can be said to have given coherence and consistency to Cappado-

¹ This is at least the impression I get even from such outstanding books on Gregory of Nyssa as Hans von Balthasar's *Présence et Pensée* (Paris, 1942), Jean Daniélou's *Platonisme et Théologie Mystique* (Paris, 1944) and Endre Ivanka's *Hellenisches und Christliches im frühbyzantinischen Geistesleben* (Vienna, 1948). (I shall hereafter refer to these books simply as *Balthasar*, *Daniélou* and *Ivanka*.) Thus Balthasar in his excellent discussion of *diastasis* in the first chapter of his book fails to mention Basil or Gregory of Nazianzus (or for that matter Methodius), though he devotes some attention to Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and the Stoics. As far as I can tell there is not one reference to either Basil or Gregory of Nazianzus in Daniélou's book! Ivanka excuses his "one-sided" use of Gregory of Nyssa (footnote on p. 43) on the ground that he is "der 'Philosoph' *kat' exochen*" and adds: "Es wäre leicht, dieselben Gedanken auch aus den anderen Kappadokiern zu belegen, nur dass sie bei Gregor von Nazianz viel stärker rhetorisch eingekleidet sind und bei Basilius weniger unter dem philosophischen als unter dem theologischen Gesichtspunkt vorgetragen werden." It seems to me, however, important to emphasize the fact that Gregory of Nyssa — philosopher *kat' exochen* as he may have been — did not invent the majority of the ideas with which Balthasar, Daniélou and Ivanka (not to mention others) are concerned. There seems in fact to be a sort of paradox here: on the one hand Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil are not considered "philosophers"; on the other, it is rather grudgingly admitted that they originated the major conceptions with which Gregory of Nyssa actually operated. The great merit of Karl Holl's *Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den Grossen Kappadoziern* (Tübingen u. Leipzig, 1904) is its careful attention to all three Cappadocians in their genetic relation to each other. For its limitations see note 27 *infra*.

² This is apparent in many places. Cf. especially the prooemium to the *De Hominis Opificio* (PG 44, 125C). Here, however, the major evidence is not the pious profession of devotion to Basil and his memory, but the obvious and pervasive respect for Basil's ideas throughout Gregory of Nyssa's writings.

cian thought; in another to have revealed its fundamental incoherence or inconsistency; but, in both respects, he was dealing with a body of inherited ideas. His originality — a quality which I would be the last to deny him — is to be found in his development of those ideas; a development that brought out both their strength and their weakness.

What I wish to do in this paper is not to list the innumerable isolated points of agreement and disagreement between the three, but to trace the main lines of their system and to indicate where it was and where it was not logically coherent.

This system cannot, I think, be understood in terms of its theology alone. Quite as essential, so far at least as its systematic integrity is concerned, are its angelology and its anthropology. Cappadocian thought can be defined as an attempt to unite the doctrine of God with the doctrine of angels and the doctrine of man in a way which would equal the logical consistency of the system of Origen without involving its heretical consequences. This was novel for its time in that, since Origen, there had not been any such attempt at systematic coherence of doctrine. Ecclesiastical debate since Origen had in fact revolved in a quite narrow theological circle — the doctrine of God and the Trinity — and the bearing of theology (strictly defined) on the other areas of Christian belief and thought had been greatly obscured. So closely in fact were fourth-century thinkers concerned with narrowly defined theological and Christological problems that even nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers such as Harnack, Loofs, Seeberg, and Holl have tended to see the whole period, including the Cappadocians themselves, in a very restricted and almost technical perspective.³ This failure to appreciate the true range and wholeness of Cappadocian thought was not corrected by the great interest excited in their own time and subsequently by their mystical writings, — especially those of Nyssa.⁴ For, deprived of a proper setting in their whole doctrine, their mysticism was unfortunately misunderstood and confused with the quite different type of mysticism set forth by Origen. Instead of leading to a better understanding of their whole work, it had in fact almost exactly the opposite effect. To some extent this error has been corrected by Balthasar and

³ The reason for this is partly that Harnack, Loofs, and Seeberg were writing histories of *dogma*, and Holl in his *Amphilochius* was also concerned with the dogmatic (trinitarian) aspect of Cappadocian thought. But it seems clear also that they really thought the dogmatic aspect to be paramount: they thought, in other words, of the Cappadocians as opponents of Arianism, Macedonianism etc., rather than as thinkers in their own right with many and many-sided interests. Contrast e.g. Harnack's treatment of Origen with his treatment of Gregory of Nyssa.

⁴ Cf. note 5 *infra*.

Daniélou,⁵ but it is, alas, a fact — as I shall hope to show — that we are still very far indeed from a correct appraisal of where Cappadocian mysticism belongs in the whole body of Cappadocian doctrine.

In the first half of the fourth century two great systems of doctrine, which we may for want of a better term call the Irenaean and the Origenist,⁶ were in fierce contention with each other. The most logical and consistent exponents of these positions — Arius and Marcellus of Ancyra — were obviously heretical from the standpoint of the transmitted Christian tradition, yet in fact it seemed for a time almost impossible to construct an orthodox doctrine which would be neither Arian nor Marcellan. The theological dispute of Arians and Sabellians (or followers of Marcellus) was almost exactly paralleled by the late fourth-century and fifth-century Christological dispute inaugurated by Apollinarius and the Antiochenes. And here again it seemed very difficult to draw a clear orthodox line between obvious Nestorian and obvious Monophysite heresy. In this conflict the Irenaean tradition, despite its Sabellian and Monophysite inclination seemed to be much closer to ordinary, traditional orthodoxy. It is often forgotten how very near Athanasius came to full agreement with Marcellus or Apollinarius.⁷ The fact is, popular piety was never shaken

⁵ Both Balthasar and Daniélou have certainly appreciated the philosopher as well as the mystic in Gregory of Nyssa and they — along with others, especially Ivanka (“Vom Platonismus zur Theorie der Mystik,” *Scholastik*, 11 [1936], pp. 163–195), Lieske (“Die Theologie der Christusmystik Gregors von Nyssa,” *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 70 [1948], pp. 19–93, 129–168, 315–340), and K. Rahner (“Die Gottesgeburt . . .” *ibid.*, 59 [1935], pp. 334 ff.) — have made clear the distinction between Gregory’s and Plotinus’ mysticism. But the relation between Gregory and Origen has not yet received proper treatment. The difficulty seems to lie in the extent to which both Gregory and “mysticism” are isolated from the context of Christian Platonism *between* Origen and Homoiousian predecessors of the Cappadocians. In other words, both Origen and Gregory are “mystics” only in the terms of their systems and their eras. Cf. p. 115 and note 51 *infra*.

⁶ Loofs deserves great credit for having made this opposition clear. Unfortunately he tried, it seems to me, to prove too much, and needlessly burdened his essentially correct view of a tradition common to Ignatius, Theophilus (in part at least), Irenaeus, and Marcellus of Ancyra by unduly localizing it (its origin is doubtless in Asia Minor, but Asia Minor was from the very earliest times open to many conflicting schools of Christian thought) and by such very dubious enterprises as that of attributing the whole “system” of Irenaeus to Theophilus. It seems to me that there are two distinct strands of thought in Irenaeus (for one of which he is much indebted to Theophilus and for the other to Tatian) which are on the whole logically incompatible, but that the “Theophilan” is by far the more important and influential. This however received its real development and assumed the dimensions of a true system at the hands of Irenaeus himself: i.e., Theophilus was a suggestive source only, not the great genius then delivered into Irenaeus’ bungling hands as Loofs holds. Cf. Loofs, *Texte u. Untersuchungen* 46.2 and *Leitfaden I*, pp. 73–77, 106–116, 175–179, 190–196, and bibliographical references therein. There are many points where it seems to me Loofs has misinterpreted the evidence. I hope to present my own version of it in a book now under preparation.

⁷ Athanasius’ official toleration of Marcellus is well known (cf. e.g. his *Apologia contra Arianos*). What is more important, his theology often closely approaches that of Marcellus

by Marcellus or Apollinarius as it was by Arius and Eunomius. Yet in the last analysis the intellect and what we might call the spiritual sense of the East could never let go of the heritage of Origen. The Cappadocians' achievement was to recover the angelological and anthropological portions of this heritage by accommodating them to the anti-Origenist theology of Athanasius. In this they were, of course, following the lead of the so-called "Homoiousian" party led by Basil of Ancyra, but, while Basil and his associates were rather narrowly concerned with the strict theological issue, the Cappadocians took a vastly broader point of view and looked back beyond the immediate Arian, Macedonian, and Apollinarian controversies to the sources of Greek theology in Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, and Methodius, and beyond even these to Plotinus and Plato. Thus at the very moment that the course of Christian thought demanded a new synthesis, the Cappadocians were on hand to supply it. Intellectually there can be no question that their achievement is comparable only with that of Clement and Origen in the East and with that of Augustine in the West.

By Irenaean tradition, I mean primarily not what Loofs has called the "Asia Minor" tradition,⁸ but rather the general point of view which Irenaeus was the first to express, though he certainly cannot be held responsible for its later representatives such as Apollinarius and Marcellus or even Athanasius. Basically speaking, this tradition conceives of salvation in a quite physical way: flesh is deified: its mortal and *genetic* quality is transformed by immortal and *agenetic* deity. The idea of an immortal and immaterial soul-substance is minimized (though usually not denied) in this tradition: the problem is not to release soul from the bodily prison, but to immortalize the body itself. With this goes an essentially monarchian or unitarian conception of God: Christ and the Holy Spirit are separate from God, the Father, only during the period or "economy" between the Creation and Eschaton; before and after this period they remain within the divine unity which, as it were, "narrows" after its temporary "expansion." The emphasis in this tradition is thus on the deification of flesh which involves the commingling of full God and full body in the act of physical theosis. It is concerned primarily neither with the separate personality of Christ (as distinct from God) nor with the separate nature of the soul as distinct from the body.

(cf. e.g. *De Decretis* 24 [H. G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke*, II (Berlin, 1935-40), 19 f.], and *Oratio contra Arianos* 2.36, 3.66 [PG 26.224,461]). Yet it is clear that Athanasius did not really follow Marcellus' economicistic views: he merely seems to have overlooked the issue (perhaps partly for party reasons) until Marcellus' heresy was generally admitted. Cf. the interesting evidence of Epiphanius (*Haer.* 72.4.4) on Athanasius' final attitude to Marcellus. For Apollinarius see note 20 *infra*.

⁸ Cf. note 6 *supra*.

It is, of course, true that Irenaeus himself as well as Athanasius and others in this tradition cannot be adequately described by any such over-simple schema:⁹ nevertheless it is the schema which on the whole does greater justice to their thought than any other. Wherever they departed from it, they fell into great logical difficulty. Here, as often, heresy alone is fully logical.

By the Origenist tradition, I mean not the authentic doctrine of Origen, but its modified fourth-century form.¹⁰ In this tradition emphasis is not on the flesh, but on the liberation of the immortal soul from the flesh. Basically flesh is the locus of passion, change, evil, death; sin is very closely equated with flesh; salvation with the unfleshed existence of the soul. With this goes a theology in which Christ and the Holy Spirit are subordinate, mediatory agents of the Father. The Father as passionless, immortal, agenetic deity cannot make direct contact with sinful, enfleshed man. The ascent of man from his genetic, mortal condition to *theosis* or union with Deity is thus mediated by agents who are, so to speak, at home in both worlds: as less than God they can meet man; as more than man they can meet God.

Before the time of Arius the subordination of the Son to the Father was mitigated by the Origenist notion of the eternal begetting of the Son. This

⁹ The problem of Irenaeus is very complex and will be treated at length in my book. What seems to me clear is that (1) Irenaeus clearly expressed an economic view of the Trinity (Cf. *Epideixis* 47; 4-6; 7, ed. in *Patrologia orientalis*, 12; *Texte u. Untersuchungen*, 31.1; *Adv. Haer.* 4.20.1; 4.20.5; 5.17.1,2; 5.18.2; 5.36.2; 4.38 *passim*, PG 7); (2) he also expressed (though less frequently) the view that the Son is distinct from the Father and is the intermediary between man and the Father (cf. *Adv. Haer.* 4.4.2; 4.6.6); and (3) he regarded such questions as above human intellect (*Adv. Haer.* 2.28.3). He usually thought of man as innately genetic or "infantile" (*νήπιος*) and hence bound to fall (especially when subjected to the devil's wiles); but he has also another view of man as originally possessing the *pneuma* or *homoiosis*, which is lost at the Fall and recovered through the Incarnation (*Adv. Haer.* 5.8.1). Thus the Fall is both cause and effect of man's unfortunate condition. Clearly it seems to me his main emphasis is on the Fall as *effect*: it is essentially due to man's *genetic* (mortal and possible) nature and can be cured only by the theosis of the flesh (cf. the pivotal passage *Adv. Haer.* 4.38.1-3). It would obviously be absurd to call Irenaeus heretical: he lived before the issues were clearly formulated. Nevertheless, it is easy to see how Marcellus represents Irenaean motifs cast in an extreme and heretical logic. Athanasius is more of a problem: in his early *Contra Gentes* his point of view is much closer to the "Origenist" tradition than is that of the, also early, *De Incarnatione*; whereas the later works of the Arian controversy seem utterly alien to the point of view of the *Contra Gentes*.

¹⁰ The reaction against the "authentic Origen" may be said to have begun in his own lifetime (cf. his interview with Beryllus [Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.33] and the recently found *Dialogue with Heraclides*). A vivid instance of the native Egyptian 'anti-Origenism' is the dispute of the Bishop Dionysius with the clergy of the Egyptian Pentapolis and later with Dionysius, the Roman pope (A.D. 257-258). Dionysius of Alexandria was himself a "modified Origenist." The explicit repudiation of Origen at Alexandria seems to date from the time of Bishop Peter (A.D. 300-311). A very good picture of the moderate Origenist position shortly after 300 is given in the extant first book of the *Apology* of Pamphilus. What is especially interesting here is the virtual agreement of Pamphilus with the detractors of Origen in disavowing such doctrines as the pre-existence of souls and an explicit subordination-

was logically possible in Origen's system because all the truly spiritual elements in it — God, his *logos*, and the other rational spirits or *logikoi* — were eternal and because the mediatory role of the *logos* was eternal in that *final* salvation or *theosis* was never reached due to the periodic lapsing of the *logikoi*. The Fall in Origen was pre-cosmic and creation was its direct consequence. This famous doctrine was not necessitated simply by Origen's concern to account for fleshly existence, but also by his concern with the diabolic fall. The devil was an angel who fell: thus his Fall cannot be explained in terms of fleshly passion or ignorance due to mortal weakness. Nor to Origen, as to the whole Greek tradition, was it possible to explain it simply as rebellion against God, for he, like Socrates, did not believe that anyone could knowingly do evil. Thus Origen was driven to the fateful idea of a lapse from God by satiation (*koros*) with God. This fateful idea necessitated two equally fateful corollaries: the notion of God's finitude and knowability (i.e., man can literally exhaust the divine nature by knowing it all), and the notion of creatureliness as involving a fundamental instability. To put this in the simplest terms: because God is fully knowable and all actual being is naturally mobile or unstable and time is unlimited, created beings can become literally so satiated or bored with God that they will turn away from Him. To be sure, because all *logikoi* contain an element of *logos* within them they are bound to return, but they are not bound to avoid further lapses for they are still, as creatures, unstable. I have here simplified a quite complicated subject, but I do not believe I have done it serious injustice. One of the great sources of confusion here is the notion — unfortunately maintained throughout Hal Koch's otherwise very able treatment of Origen¹¹ — that the lapsing of the *logikoi* is simply due to their

ism. But Methodius (martyred 311) represents the first systematic and theologically important refutation of Origen. From then on the characteristic Origenist doctrines disappear: they are not e.g. mentioned by Eusebius of Caesarea. In this paper all quotations from Eusebius, Clemens Alexandrinus, Epiphanius, Methodius, and Origen are, unless otherwise indicated, taken from *Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (Berlin, 1897–1956).

¹¹ Cf. Hal Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1932), p. 117 ff. What Koch fails to understand is that Origen cannot make free-will the *only* cause of sin because in that case sin would constitute a deliberate and knowing choice of evil. But Koch's misunderstanding is explicable in that Origen does repeatedly assert the freedom of all *logikoi*. Origen could not account for sin (as we shall see the Cappadocians and most other Greek theologians of the period did) as a partial product of the passions and weaknesses. The real sin in Origen occurs before there are bodies. Yet Origen does not leave sin *unmotivated* or ascribe it to a sheer preference for evil. The crucial text here is *Peri Archon* 2.9.2 where it is clearly stated that all created (*genetic*) beings are *necessarily* subject to change and alteration (*necessario convertibiles et mutabiles*). The choice of evil or good is then explained as due to the action of *κόρος* or satiation. Satiation with God, however, is possible only because God is conceived as exhaustible or limited (*πεπερασμένην*). Origen holds the created beings morally culpable for

unalienable freedom of choice. Such an analysis quite fails to see that "freedom" here explains nothing since, to Origen, no amount of freedom can itself explain why anyone should in full knowledge choose evil, which is precisely what the devil and all lapsed *logikoi* did.

All this is the indispensable background for Origen's mysticism as set forth in, e.g., the famous twenty-seventh Homily on Numbers and that on the Song of Songs. That is to say, the ascent to God is not *per se* the prime interest of Origen. His problem rather is the overcoming of the tendency to lapse. Thus the reiterated emphasis on temptation and the victory over temptation in his mystical writings — which, as we shall see, so notably distinguishes them from those of Gregory of Nyssa — is explicable only in these terms. The problem again is always to overcome the temptation to lapse. Compared to this, the actual ascent to God is a much lesser problem.¹² We need not here discuss the highly disputable question as to whether Origen ever held out the possibility of a final victory over the tendency to lapse. I myself think that he did finally come to such a conclusion, and that in this respect his Commentary on Romans represents his own final word and not a mere interpolation of Rufinus.¹³ But this does not concern us here.

What happened after Origen's death was the relatively rapid rejection of his system as a whole. The whole theory of satiation, the pre-cosmic fall, the necessity of eternal salvation, etc., was either misunderstood, ignored, or denied. Even professed fourth-century admirers like Eusebius of Caesarea

such satiety, but it is clear that only a very few beings, perhaps only one (beside the *logos* and Holy Spirit) avoid *kópos* (cf. *Peri Archon* 2.5) absolutely. Thus the essential purpose of bodily creation is pedagogical in the sense that the spirits must be brought to "know themselves," i.e. to know how easily their unstable natures can lapse and what hard work it is to avoid satiation. We know from Gregory Thaumaturgus' *Oratio ad Originem*¹¹ how Origen insistently urged on his pupils the "Know thyself" maxim. Cf. the famous passage (*Com. in Cant.* p. 141): *Nisi cognoveris te, o bona-sive pulchra-inter mulieres, egredere tu in vestigiis gregum, et pasce haedos tuos in tabernaculis pastorum.* The connection of self-knowledge with education (*paideusis*) indicates clearly the rational-intellectual character of "sin" for Origen. There is the bare possibility in his system that a *logikos* could avoid satiation and lapse, but in fact lapse is a practical consequence of genetic instability and ignorance and of the finitude of God. From this aspect the scheme is almost (if not quite) necessitarian. On the other side the return to the original state is also necessary because of the divine *logos* within each *logikos* (cf. *Comm. in Joan.* 1.34, 2.3, 6.38 and especially the crucial passage *Peri Archon* 4.4.9–10: *Omnis mens . . . unius sine dubio debet esse naturae*).

¹² Cf. notes 50 and 51 *infra*, and note 11 *supra*.

¹³ This is a difficult and uncertain question. Its solution rests largely on one's view of the genuineness of the well-known passage in Origen's Commentary on Romans (PG 14. 1053A). See the discussion of this in Einar Molland, *The Conception of the Gospel in the Alexandrian Theology* (Skrifter . . . Norske Videnskaps Akademi, 1938, II Hist.-Fil. Klasse I.2). The real reason for accepting the Romans passage is not, certainly, any faith in Rufinus, but rather that it seems to fit Origen's thesis of progressive self-knowledge and that the passage seems rather more eloquent and striking than a mere invention of Rufinus would be apt to be.

show little knowledge of Origen's true system and its logical connections.¹⁴ What survived and remained highly influential were his allegorical method of scriptural exegesis, his teaching about the "eternally begotten" son, and his general conception of the body-soul dualism with salvation thought of in spiritual or non-physical terms, — in short, what I have called above the Origenist tradition.¹⁵

In fact, however, the theory of the "eternally begotten" son is logically impossible when divorced from the whole Origenist system. Once the pre-cosmic fall and the eternal cycle of lapse and recovery were abandoned as unorthodox, the need for the son's eternal mediation and, in this sense, eternal "begetting" is wholly removed. For Origen's *logos* was also economical, though he otherwise represented an emphasis quite distinct from the economism of Irenaeus. That is to say, *logos* and *logikoi* form together an eternal unity in both their original and their restored state: the role of an independent mediatory *logos* is clearly confined to the moments *between* the unities.¹⁶ Christ is eternally begotten to overcome the eternally recurring moments of dispersion. When, however, the Origenist theory of eternal *logikoi* was abandoned, only God the Father could be thought of as *eternal*. Christ's *genetic* status could no longer be disguised by his eternity: he became, like other creatures, a creation in time or at least a creation immediately preceding the running of cosmic time (that is to say, a creature designed not for eternity, but for his role in creation and its special temporal extension). Arius carefully distinguished between a creation in time and a creation before clock time or the aeons had begun to run, but there can be no doubt that the popular Arian slogan of "there was a time before he was" expresses the true spirit of Arianism.¹⁷ Christ had been reduced to a creature like other creatures, so far as his essential nature was concerned. And all creatures were now conceived as *genetic* in the usual sense of changeable,

¹⁴ Cf. note 10 *supra*.

¹⁵ Perhaps this was best exemplified by Gregory Thaumaturgus, the countryman and inspirer of the Cappadocians. Eusebius of Caesarea was quite unable to grasp the true greatness of Origen despite his manifest admiration. The *ἀείγενής* was a favorite catchword of Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria at the beginning of the Arian movement (cf. H. G. Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* 3.1, Urkunde 1).

¹⁶ Cf. *Comm. in Joan.* 1.16 (= Preuschen p. 20.8–23) and especially 1.20 (= Preuschen p. 24.23–25).

¹⁷ Cf. here especially Opitz, *op. cit.* Arius says here to his friend Eusebius of Nicomedia that Christ came into existence at the Father's will and desire *πρὸ χρόνων καὶ πρὸ αἰώνων*. This must be taken to be a more accurate statement of his position than the *ἢν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἢν* (Athanas. *Oratio contra Arianos* 1.5 = PG 26.21A: from the *Thalia*, supposedly). What Arius clearly means is that the *logos* was created before actual time had begun (time runs along only with the created physical cosmos), but as an agent of the Father in creation and not as co-eternal with the Father. It is clear that Arius distinguishes "time" and "eternity" as Origen did not. Here I see the influence of Methodius on Arius. Cf. note 69 *infra*, also note 65.

temporal, and non-divine. Origen's creatures had in fact not been fully *genetic* in this sense, for all of them had, like the gnostic *pneumatics*, possessed a nature which required eventual theosis or return to divine unity.¹⁸ Arius thus only drew the logical consequences of the rejection of Origenism. There can be little doubt that the refutation of Origen in this connection by men like Methodius made Arianism, logically speaking, almost inevitable.¹⁹

The most important consequence of Arianism was, by way of reaction, a striking recrudescence of Irenaean Christianity. Its great champion was, of course, Athanasius, but its most logical exponents were the heretics Marcellus of Ancyra and Apollinarius. We know now, thanks to the researches of Richard,²⁰ that Athanasius prior to 362 had taken a completely Apollinarian stand while extending to Marcellus even greater toleration than most of the anti-Nicaean party extended to Arius. The fact, of course, was that Athanasius was quite blind to any heresy but Arianism. The Athanasian party gathered to itself all those who thought of salvation simply as the full divinization of the flesh by the full god-head, and who for this purpose denied both the personal separateness of Christ and the reality of his human soul. This was a crude Irenaeism – far cruder than that of Irenaeus himself – but it enlisted the support of popular piety as the anti-Nicaeans could not. Or, to put the matter negatively, the threat to salvation and *theosis* implied by a genetic and creaturely Christ was far more obvious than the threat implied by a denial of his divine or human personality.

The problem which confronted the anti-Marcellan and anti-Apollinarian side was, in short, to divorce Athanasian theology from the crude physicalist Christology and anthropology of most Athanasians. This, however, was not apparent until the radical Arianism of Aetius and Eunomius emerged in the mid-fourth century and secured the protection of the Emperor's direct advisors (Eudoxius, Acacius, Ursachius, etc.) and seemingly of Constantius himself.²¹ The definition of God as one who is wholly and exclusively

¹⁸ Cf. note 11 *supra*.

¹⁹ Cf. note 65 *infra*.

²⁰ See Marcel Richard, *Mélanges de science religieuse* 4 (1947), pp. 5–54. His analysis of the *Oratio contra Arianos* 3.26–57 seems to put Athanasius' monophysitism prior to 362 beyond any question. Athanasius however admitted as a result of the Alexandrian council in 362 that the *logos* cannot dwell in a soulless body (*σῶμα ἄψυχον*: see the *Tomus ad Antiochenos* 7, PG 26.804B). Presumably he was unaware of the later and subtler form of Apollinarius' doctrine.

²¹ It is clear that the whole situation changed after Constantius became sole Emperor in 353. This was the signal for a renewed attack on Athanasius (Councils of Arles, 353, and Milan, 355). As a result, all the Athanasians in the West (Lucifer of Cagliari, Eusebius of Vercelli, Dionysius of Milan, the Pope Liberius, Hosius, and Hilary) were routed, and new bishops were installed. Eudoxius, the protector of Eunomius and Aetius, became bishop of Antioch and, in 360, of Constantinople. The Sirmium formula (which forbade *mention* of the

agenetos (with no other qualities) not merely widened the cleft between him and all other creatures to an unbearable extent, but also reduced Him to a mere concept which man could know completely and, intellectually speaking, exhaust.²² This eliminated *theosis* in two ways: it denied man's capacity to reach God while it changed *gnosis* or knowledge of God into a simple intellectual exercise wholly devoid of religious feeling or mystical depth. In this sense Eunomius (here going far beyond Arius) returned to Origen's doctrine of divine finitude, but quite without Origen's mystical sense of the inherent unity of every rational being with the Divine Center.²³

This, then, was the doctrine which roused the so-called homoiousian party of Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea to publish their great manifestoes of 358 and 359.²⁴ The common nature (*ousia*) of the three persons was now admitted and the formula of three *hypostaseis* in one *ousia* was almost inevitably produced.²⁵ But the Homoiousians quite failed to adjust their recognition of the common *ousia* to their anthropology and Christology. They did not, in other words, realize at all the far-reaching consequences entailed by their rejection of the Origenist-mediatorial Christ.

Thus the task allotted to the three Cappadocians was to reconstruct the entire Origenist or anti-Irenaean position on the basis of the homoiousian

words *homoiousion* and *homoousion*) was proclaimed in 357. But it was the gathering of Acacius, Uranius, and others with Eudoxius at his new Antioch see in 358, and their congratulatory letter to Valens and Ursachius (for having put a stop to talk about *ousia*) that roused the "moderates" (George of Laodicea, Basil of Ancyra especially) to action and brought about the Ancyra meeting and the synodal letter of the same year (358). (Cf. H. Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church* [Wolf trans.], 3, chap. 8 and sources therein listed). I have here been greatly indebted to Gummerus, *Die homöousianische Partei* (Leipzig, 1900).

²² The main contention of Aetius and Eunomius was that God, as *agenetos*, is simple and whole (*ὅλος*), beyond quantity, quality or change (*διαμένει ποσότητος καὶ ποιότητος καὶ ἀπλώς εἰπεῖν πάσης μεταβολῆς ἀμείνων*: *Syntagma* of Aetius quoted in Epiphanius, *Haer.* 76.12, Holl, 3, p. 357 f.). This language is re-echoed exactly by Eunomius (PG 30.844B).

²³ What Eunomius insists upon (see reference *supra*) is that the term *agenetos* is not merely a name or human way of talking about God, but that it is really and truly his entire essence, the acknowledgement of what he really is (*ὅμολογία . . . τοῦ ἔναυ ὁ ἔστιν*). He is completely knowable *quā agenetos*. It is this notion that Basil attacks most insistently: he insists we do not know *what* God is (*τί ἔστιν*), only *that* he is (*ὅτι ἔστιν*: PG 29.545A). But this same point had already been made by Basil of Ancyra (see note 25 *infra*).

²⁴ Cf. Gummerus (*op. cit.*) 62 f. See also the account in Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.13 (PG 67.1144 f.).

²⁵ Cf. especially the second letter (Epiphanius, *Haer.*, 73.12–22, Holl, 3, p. 284.12ff.). The formula of three *hypostases* and one *ousia* is not stated in so many words, but is clearly implied: the distinctions of the three persons (*ἰδότητας τῶν προσώπων*) do not in any way affect the unity of power, will and divine status (*θεότητα*). The two documents make clear that *agennēsia* in no sense exhausts the divine nature: in fact more insistence is put on the idea of *life* (on e.g. the basis of John 5:26). God is both father and creator, the second document points out, but a *son* is not necessarily a *creature*. Thus the Church holds that God has *both* creative energy (*κτιστικὴν ἐνέργειαν*) and genetic (*γεννητικὴν*).

theology. For this they had to go beyond their rather narrow-minded contemporaries and immediate predecessors to the great minds of the past; to Origen, Clement, and the pagan Platonists. The influence of Irenaeus himself was mainly indirect and mostly through Methodius.²⁶ The result was a remarkable synthesis with one major flaw. Let us look at the synthesis and the flaw, each in their turn.

1. The doctrine of the one common nature really destroyed the mediatorial *logos* as it had been elaborated by Origen and, before him, in less adequate form by the Apologists. This doctrine in a nutshell maintained that the *logos* could mediate between God and man — the impassible and the passible, the agenetic and the genetic, the permanent and the changing — precisely because the *logos* was neither God nor man but an intermediate being. If the *logos* were now to be deemed full God, such a view became clearly impossible. On the whole, all three Cappadocians were quite aware of this. The fact that, as Holl pointed out,²⁷ they still continued to talk of Son and Holy Spirit in mediatory terms does not really constitute a fundamental contradiction in their theology. For the mediation described, for example, in Basil's treatise on the Holy Spirit, is essentially a gratuitous act of condescension which does not in any way affect God's nature. One must grant that neither Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, nor Gregory of Nyssa were wholly consistent on this point. Yet their theology is nonetheless consistent in its main lines. By this I do not, of course, mean that the various arguments by which they sought to reconcile the unity with the trinity were devoid of glaring logical fallacies. This subject has been almost definitively treated by Holl in his *Amphilochius*.²⁸ Unfortunately Holl's analysis stopped short at what we may call the Cappadocians' essential theology for whose proper elucidation we are primarily and especially indebted to Balthazar and, secondarily, to such men as Ivanka and Daniélou.²⁹

The essential idea here which we see first in Basil, more eloquently and fully perhaps in Gregory of Nazianzus, though given its full scope and

²⁶ P. 119 *infra*.

²⁷ Cf. Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium* . . . (pp. 116–235). The question of the sense in which the Cappadocians thought of Christ and the Holy Spirit as *mediators* is most obscure. They certainly used, on occasion, mediatorial language (cf., e.g., Basil on *de Spiritu Sancto*, PG 32.153A–B, 127D — Holl cites such passages *in extenso*). Yet it seems also clear that they were not subordinationist (save in phraseology and possibly by inadvertence). The Spirit leads men to God, but we can never really “know” God. No one really knows God, but only his Spirit (PG 32.144A). Hence though the Spirit leads us *to* God, we cannot know the Spirit *as* God. Cf. note 54 *infra*.

²⁸ Cf. Holl, *op. cit.* esp. pp 148 f.

²⁹ Cf. Balthasar and Daniélou *opp. citt. passim*. Cf. especially Balthasar's Introduction and Part I (pp. 1–80) and Daniélou, pp. 153–182. But cf. also Ivanka, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–67.

meaning only in Gregory of Nyssa, was that of the infinity and incomprehensible grandeur of God's nature.³⁰ Though this idea followed logically from Athanasian doctrine as finally accepted by the Homoiousians, it is clear that the Cappadocians, especially Gregory of Nazianzus, found its most intensive expression in Clement.³¹ So far as I can tell, no Father before Gregory of Nazianzus had seen the importance of Clement's theology in this respect, or the radical difference between his and Origen's doctrine of God. Clement, in fact, was the first to point out clearly that man can never hope to understand or fully reach God and that his mystical search for Him is in effect an infinite quest. This idea, however, was obscured in Clement by his mediatory conception of the *Logos*: to him the *Logos* is a mediator precisely because he is knowable while the Father is not.³² It was thus the obliteration of the distinction between Father's and Son's natures which gave the Cappadocian version of Clement's theology so much greater an impact. The life of the Redeemed becomes the infinite pursuit of an ever pursuable God: the creature never overcomes his separation from the creator (*theosis* thus loses its neo-platonic and Origenist sense of the loss of creatureliness in the divine unity), but achieves a constantly increasing satisfaction in the infinite process of approximation to God. This whole conception also, as e.g., Ivanka has pointed out, once and for all disposes of any Origenist satiation or weariness with God.³³

It is, too, a fundamentally *spiritual* interpretation of man's destiny. The emphasis is not on the deification of flesh — as in the Irenaean tradition — but on an increasingly intellectual and immaterial experience. For this very reason the progress of the soul toward God is not attended by any fleshly desire or tendency to lapse through fleshly passion. In fact the status of the

³⁰ For Basil see his letter to Amphilius (no. 234 Deferrari, Loeb) and PG 29.520C, 534C, 535C, 537A, 542B etc. For Gregory of Nazianzus see almost the entire Second Theological Oration (PG 36.25-72) where God is called a φύσις ἀληττός τε καὶ ἀπερίληπτος (32B). For Gregory of Nyssa see especially *Contra Eunomium* 12 (PG 45.932 f.), ed. W. Jaeger, I (Berlin, 1921), p. 234 f.

³¹ The dependence, in particular, of Gregory of Nazianzus' Second Theological Discourse on Clement (*Stromateis* 5.12) is striking. This, so far as I know, was first clearly pointed out by Henri Pinault, *Le Platonisme de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (La Roche-sur-Yon, 1925), pp. 73-82. Clement's use of Plato (*Timaeus* 28C) is re-echoed by Gregory of Nazianzus. Clement's point of view and particular imagery (especially in *Stromateis* 2.2) is also made extensive use of by Gregory of Nyssa in his *Vita Moysi*. Apparently Daniélou, in his extensive discussion of this imagery (cf. especially pp. 185-220) did not realize its Clementine origin. For the difference in the conception of God (the Father) compare Clement (*Stromateis* 2.12) with Origen (*Peri Archon* 2.9.1).

³² See here especially *Stromateis* 4.25 (Stählin 2, p. 317): ὁ μὲν οὖν θεὸς ἀναπόδεικτος ὁν, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστημονικός, ὁ δὲ νίδιος σοφία τέ ἔστι καὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἀλήθεια καὶ ὅσα ἀλλα τούτῳ συγγενή, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἀπόδεξιν ἔχει καὶ διέξοδον. . . .

³³ See Ivanka, *op. cit.*, p. 49 f.

liberated soul is likened to that of the angels.³⁴ Though angels are creatures and can never hope to reach or become God the infinite, they lack the interval or *diastema*³⁵ of time by which the fleshly or human creature is bounded. Time for them does not exist as a process by which the present is destroyed or reduced to a dead pastness: there is only the *aeon* or unbounded time in which the “interval” is, so to speak, continuously open toward the future which is God and in which, therefore, the past has no power over the present. This is why evil can never be final and spiritual progress can never be interrupted by lapse: once the soul has passed through the inherently limited *diastema* of mortal existence and evil, there is nothing but infinite good before it.³⁶ The fact that man at the general resurrection will once more assume a body in no sense undermines his similarity to the angelic creation, since in that case the body will be spiritually transformed. To Gregory of Nyssa, in fact, matter itself is merely an assembly of spiritual or non-material qualities.³⁷

2. The great difficulty with this whole conception of God, men, and

³⁴ Cf. Basil on angels (*Hom. in Psalm.* 44, PG 29.388C), Gregory of Nazianzus (PG 36.72A-D) and Gregory of Nyssa (PG 45.28C-D). The angelic nature is *originally*, of course, distinct from the human, but man’s final or restored state is conceived as very close to the angelic. The most thorough treatment of this is in Gregory of Nyssa’s *De opificio Hominis* (cf. especially 17).

³⁵ It was, so far as I know, Balthasar (*op. cit.* 1-36) who first realized the great significance of the Cappadocian use of the term *diastasis* or *diastema*. Cf. the note 65 *infra* for its origin. Balthasar however pays no attention to its Christian use in any father but Gregory of Nyssa. But Gregory is here using a concept already fully developed by Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus. Basil distinguished three kinds of “time”: (1) the true eternity ($\tau\ddot{o}\ \dot{\alpha}\dot{\iota}\dot{\delta}\iota\dot{o}\nu$) of God (cf. PG 29.608C); (2) the *aeon* or *hyper-chronic* time of angels; and (3) the *diastema* or interval that accompanies the physical cosmos (PG 29.560B and 13B). Gregory of Nazianzus follows much the same scheme of time as Basil: God is altogether collected in himself and has no past or future, no beginning or stopping: what *we* call time ($\chi\rho\dot{o}\nu\dot{o}\sigma$) is a sort of $\chi\rho\dot{o}\nu\dot{o}\kappa\dot{\iota}\dot{\iota}\dot{\mu}\dot{\rho}\mu\dot{\alpha}$ (*PG* 36.320B), which accompanies the sun’s movements as the *aeon* accompanies eternal ($\dot{\alpha}\dot{\iota}\dot{\delta}\iota\dot{o}\nu$) beings. Here Gregory does not clearly distinguish *aeon* from eternity ($\tau\ddot{o}\ \dot{\alpha}\dot{\iota}\dot{\delta}\iota\dot{o}\nu$) but his general view of the difference between *angels* and *men* implies such a distinction: i.e., angels lack the infinite *comprehensive* presentness of God, but are not bound to the *thin* presentness of men on earth with its disappearance of reality in past and future ($\tau\ddot{o}\ \gamma\dot{\alpha}\dot{\rho}\ \dot{\eta}\dot{\nu}\ \kappa\dot{\alpha}\ \dot{\epsilon}\dot{\sigma}\dot{\tau}\dot{\alpha}\iota$, $\tau\dot{\nu}\ \kappa\dot{\alpha}\dot{\theta}\dot{\iota}\dot{\mu}\dot{\alpha}\ \chi\rho\dot{o}\nu\dot{o}\ \tau\mu\dot{\mu}\dot{\mu}\dot{\alpha}\dot{\tau}\dot{\alpha}\iota$, $\kappa\dot{\alpha}\ \tau\dot{\gamma}\dot{\iota}\dot{\sigma}\ \dot{\rho}\dot{\epsilon}\dot{\nu}\dot{\sigma}\dot{\tau}\dot{\gamma}\dot{\iota}\dot{\sigma}\ \dot{\phi}\dot{\iota}\dot{\sigma}\dot{\epsilon}\dot{\omega}\dot{\sigma}$ *PG* 36.317B). (Jean Plagnieux, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze Théologien* [Paris, 1951], sheds no light on this matter or on other matters treated in this article.) Gregory of Nyssa’s view of time is described at length in Balthasar (see *supra*), and agrees fully with those of Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus. The heavenly life of God altogether lacks the *diastema* or *diastasis* (PG 45.365 A-C) of human time. He is, like Gregory of Nazianzus (and occasionally Basil), vague as to the distinction of *aeon*, eternity, and *diastasis*. Certainly intellectual natures are adiastemic in being free from material space and time (PG 44.84D). He insists that the true temporal *diastasis* is the interval that characterizes *fallen* or *sinful* creation (PG 44.1109C; *ibid.*, 46.521 A-B). Time is connected with the instability of the passions: in the movement from past to future, death and life (the forward motion of the spirit) are mixed.

³⁶ Man will then be like the angels (Gregory of Nyssa, PG 44.196A, 201B-204A).

³⁷ PG 44.212D-213B.

angels is that it makes the explanation of sin almost impossible. Here we must bear clearly in mind the fundamentally Greek conception of sin which the Cappadocians fully shared with Socrates and Plato. To all of them it is unthinkable that anyone can sin in full knowledge of what he is doing. Thus for the Cappadocians the explanation of Adam's fall can only be attributed to (a) the persuasion of Satan, (b) the deception of the fleshly passions, and (c) the weakness of the human intellect.³⁸ They did attribute to sin an element of moral culpability, but it is certainly very subordinate.

Yet this explanation of sin is woefully inadequate, to say the least, since it involves as its premises the sin of Satan and the existence of bodily passion. In the proper sense man cannot be held fully responsible for either (i.e., neither Satan nor the body are his doing), but neither, of course, can God be held responsible for He is by definition perfectly good. The only recourse therefore is to assume that both Satan and man must have fallen in some pre-bodily or angelic state, and that man's bodily condition is a penal or pedagogical consequence of his prior sin. Such a supposition, however, involves the fact of spiritual or angelic sin. This of course was explicable in Origen's system by the doctrine of satiation and its logical corollary, the finitude of God. But, as we have seen, the whole post-Origenist and Arian development had precluded such a solution in the era of the Cappadocians. Indeed, the infinitely progressive character of the spiritual life was, as we have seen, the really distinctive element in Cappadocian thought. Angels, strictly speaking, cannot fall since they are by definition spiritual beings without fleshly passion and without any occlusion of their intellect by it. If

³⁸ The best text on this is Gregory of Nyssa's account of the Fall in the *De Opificio* (PG 44.192B-196B and, especially, 197C-201A). But the views of Basil (PG 31.344C ff.) and of Gregory of Nazianzus (PG 36.320C and following) are quite similar, except that Basil uses the Origenist idea of satiety (*koros*) as one cause of Adam's fall. But Basil emphasizes Adam's weakness (*ἀβούλια*) and Nazianzus his fleshly and infantile character and the devil's cleverness. The discussion of the whole problem of freedom in Gregory of Nyssa by Jerome Gaïth, *La conception de la liberté chez Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris, 1953), is extremely penetrating. Gaïth recognizes (p. 104) that in Gregory of Nyssa sin is not "une révolte consciente et voulue contre Dieu." Therefore, as Gaïth recognizes "il faut donc admettre que Grégoire a tendance à diminuer la culpabilité du péché" (p. 106). Gaïth has assembled all the passages in Gregory bearing on this problem. The equation of sin with ignorance is very clearly put in the *De Mortuis* (PG 46.497B-C) where Gregory posits that there is in man a natural attraction (*φυσική . . . σχέσις*) to the good, but that his error of judgment (*ἀκρισία*) as to what is really good (*τὸ δύνως καλόν*) usually causes the majority (*τὰ πολλά*) of his sins (*τῶν ἀμαρτανομέων*). So it seems quite clear that the Cappadocians were unable to dissociate sin from ignorance and ignorance from fleshly passion. Hence their great difficulty with angelic sin. I cannot agree with Professor Ladner's view (cf. notes 114 and 152 of his article in this volume) that only some of the angels were naturally immune from sin, while others were not. All clearly had free will and, what is more, all possessed an intellect not occluded by fleshly passion. It is for just this reason that Gregory of Nazianzus reveals an obvious embarrassment in discussing the angelic fall (cf. *infra* p. 112).

they were to sin, it could be only in full knowledge of their action — an idea which seemed to the Cappadocians to be *a priori* impossible. Yet the Cappadocians were in fact confronted by (A) the Fall of Satan and (B) the bodily situation of man:

(A) In respect to Satan, it is clear that they could give no satisfactory reason for what happened. Here it is worthwhile to document the matter by recalling the exact words of Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa.

1. Basil in his Homily on Psalm 44 (PG 29.388C) declares that angels cannot change (*οὐ γὰρ ἐπιδέχονται τὴν ἀλλοίωσιν*). They remain in the status of their original creation (*ἐν ἥπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκτίσθησαν καταστάσει ἐν ταύτῃ διαμένονσιν*). This accounts for the singular language of Basil when describing the angelic Fall (Homily on Psalm 32, PG 29.333CD): Angels, he says, are not created infants and then gradually perfected (like men) but receive their sanctity “along with their first constitution as a mixture in their very substance” (*ἐν τῇ πρώπῃ συστάσει καὶ τῷ οἰονεὶ φυράματι τῆς οὐσίας αὐτῶν συγκαταβληθεῖσαν ἔσχον τὴν ἀγιότητα*). This, he then adds, is why they are so reluctant to do evil (*δυσμετάθετοι . . πρὸς τὴν κακίαν*). Their sanctity and their perseverance in it (*τὸ μόνιμον εἰς ἀρετήν*) is dyed into them by the Holy Spirit. We are not helped here by any reluctance to accept these Homilies as genuinely Basil’s: the language of the Treatise on the Holy Spirit is, if anything, stronger. Here he says (PG 32.137A) that though the sanctity of angels is not natural but derived, they retain it and cannot lose it: “They keep their dignity (*ἀξίαν*) through persistence in the good, having on the one hand freedom of choice (*τὸ αὐτεξούσιον*) but never, on the other hand, falling from their assiduous regard for the truly real Good (*οὐδέποτε δὲ ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ὄντως ἀγαθοῦ προσεδρείας ἐκπίπτουσαι*).” That is why no angel can say “Jesus be Anathema.” Yet by a strange non sequitur Basil then admits that that is just what the fallen angels have said, illustrating, he says, his point about angelic free will, i.e., that the invisible powers are evenly balanced between vice and virtue and so need the Holy Spirit’s aid. Then as if to compound the non sequitur, he adds just a little later on (140B) that the angels possess their perfection not by progress (*ἐκ προκοπῆς*), but immediately at their creation.

2. Gregory of Nazianzus is even more overtly illogical (if possible). He ascribes sinlessness to God and the first asynthetic nature. “Sin,” he adds, “is human and a property of the low and synthetic” (*τῆς κάτω συνθέσεως*:

Oratio 11 In Sanctum Baptisma, PG 36.365B–C). Elsewhere (*Oratio 38, PG 36.317B*) he declares that he would describe the angels as immobile toward evil (*ἀκινήτους πρὸς τὸ κακόν*) if Lucifer's fall did not compel him to describe them not as immobile, but reluctantly mobile (*μὴ ἀκινήτους ἀλλὰ δυσκινήτους*).

3. In Gregory of Nyssa the contradiction or non sequitur is the more glaring because of his greater emphasis on the necessarily progressive character of angelic existence. The angelic creation is forever kept in the good and alters only toward the good (*πρὸς τὸ μεῖζον ἀλλοιομένη*: Homily 6 on the Canticles, *PG 44.886C–D*). This, as we have seen, is due to the essentially adiastemic character of the angelic nature (cf. his Commentary on the Hexaemeron, *PG 44.84D* and *In Cant. Hom. 15, PG 44.1109A*). Nevertheless in his account of Lucifer's fall in the Catechetical Oration (*PG 45.28C–D*) he represents all created natures as inherently changeable and free: so the apostate angel, “by a movement of his own will,” chose to close his eyes to the good. Yet nothing can equal the clearness of Gregory's assertion (in the *De Oratione Dominica, Oratio 4, PG 44.1165B–C*) that the asomatic, angelic life above “is altogether free from wickedness” and “every pollution of sin” and this despite the angel's free will (*αὐτεξούσιον*).

(B) In respect to man, it is clear that Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus inclined to an Origenist solution but stopped short of a genuine Origenism, especially of admitting a creation of human souls before the creation of the material cosmos. We can see this very clearly in Basil's first Homily on the *Hexaemeron*³⁹ and in Nazianzus' thirty-eighth oration.⁴⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, however, went further. Though in his Catechetical Oration⁴¹ he simply repeated something very like Nazianzus' argument in the oration, he really grappled with the problem only in his *De Opificio Hominis*. Also the close

³⁹ Basil here develops what would seem to be a fully Origenist logic. He posits two creations, one wholly spiritual, one visible and material. The words “in the beginning” refer only to the latter because the former is altogether *ἱπερχρόνιος, αἰώνια, ἀτὸς* (*PG 29.18A*). But the second was created only for a purpose: i.e., to be a “school-house and training place” (*δδασκαλεῖον καὶ παιδευτήριον*, 13B) of souls. But would God have created souls of this lower order (i.e. in a second, *material* creation) and such a *school* if they had not already erred in a higher state? There must be some reason for this *creation manquée*. The language here suggests an Origenist answer, but it is quite clear that Basil *in fact* rejected the Origenist theory of the lapsed *logikoi* (*PG 31.344C* and following). Furthermore the well-known biblicalism of Basil is decidedly unfavorable to the extremes of Origenist allegorization.

⁴⁰ See *PG 36.320* and following.

⁴¹ Gregory of Nyssa here, like Gregory of Nazianzus, follows Methodius (see note 65 *infra*) in representing man's mortal qualities as “coats of skin” that he assumed *after* the *historical* fall. There is no mention of any double creation.

relation of this to Basil's *Hexaemeron*⁴² suggests that he was quite conscious of the logical gap in Basil's argument. It is not necessary here to repeat his very well-known elucidation of Genesis I. He could account for a bodily, sexual and passionate creation — in short, man as he was when he actually fell — only by positing God's foreknowledge of sin in a hypothetical, prior, and spiritual creation which for this very reason was never realized. Balthasar has ingeniously tried to defend this clearly illogical doctrine by assuming two levels of human existence in which what is cause on one level can be consequence on the other.⁴³ But in fact such explanation breaks down for two good reasons: first, that strictly spiritual sin is impossible on Gregory of Nyssa's premises, and second, that we cannot on these premises equate the *diastemic* life of man with the *adiastemic* life of angels. Every creature is either in time or in the *aeon*, i.e., a spiritual state which is eternal, but not divine. He cannot be in both, and he can sin only in one. We can also argue that foreknowledge of a sin that has not occurred can never justify the punishment of it. In short, this solution advanced by Gregory of Nyssa is clearly impossible. And perhaps his insistence on its hypothetical character is indicative of his own uneasiness about it. Yet we cannot write off the *De Opificio* as a merely tentative exercise in biblical exegesis, since it is, in fact, an eloquent testimony to the almost insuperable difficulty of the entire Cappadocian anthropology.

The point is that in abandoning the Origenist anthropology — and we must add angelology also — the Cappadocians deprived themselves of any explanation of sin. Granting that, according to their premise, the Fall was explicable only in terms of the Devil and fleshly passion, the problem of explaining the *angelic* Fall and the *creation* of possible bodies cried aloud for solution. But they could not solve it without undermining either their doctrine of angelic perseverance and infinite spiritual progress or their doctrine of divine perfection. Gregory of Nyssa certainly saw very clearly — far more clearly in fact than some of his modern interpreters — that the bodily existence must be explained if God were to be exculpated from the charge of creating evil; that is, of creating passion-ridden bodies enclosed in a temporal interval that excluded true spiritual progress.⁴⁴ The fact that his explanation in the *De Opificio* must be called an unconvincing *tour de force* merely highlights the nature of his dilemma, the keenness of his analysis,

⁴² Basil had not completed his *Hexaemeron*, leaving unfinished the crucial creation of man. Gregory of Nyssa's *De Opificio* was designed to complete Basil's work (cf. PG 44.125B-D).

⁴³ Cf. Balthasar, *op. cit.*, p. 49. Roger Leys, *L'image de Dieu chez S. Grégoire de Nysse* (Brussels, 1951), pp. 87–88, tries to refute Balthasar's argument on the ground that the two "times" (of the two creations) can have nothing in common.

⁴⁴ Cf. PG 44.180B–181A.

and the essential impossibility of a solution on his premises. After all, neither Basil nor Nazianzus did any better; they only left the problem without any solution at all.

What we find if we penetrate beneath the thought of this whole era is an almost irreconcilable conflict between the biblical doctrine of creation and a Greek-Platonic dualism. This is accompanied and paralleled by a similar conflict between the biblical and the Greek views of sin. In fact both conflicts are at bottom identical.⁴⁵ Christians in the second century had rejected the gnostic attack on creator and creation, and had in rebuttal asserted both the goodness of the Creator and the Creation. But their Platonism nonetheless persisted in their attempts to explain the material creation as either a kind of immaturity (Irenaeus) or a penal and pedagogical necessity (Origen).⁴⁶ This was fundamentally because they equated sin (or in Origen the consequence of sin) with bodily passion, and salvation or *theosis* with the un-passioned or *impassible* life. Had they conceived of sin as a really spiritual phenomenon they would have experienced much less difficulty either in explaining the angelic Fall or in dissociating evil from the body or its normal passions.⁴⁷

What emerged in the fourth century was a perception that no doctrine of mediation between the spiritual and material (or agenetic and genetic) poles of the Platonic dualism could suffice if God were really infinite and incomprehensible and Christ were really God.⁴⁸ The gap between creator and creature could not be bridged in some Platonic *theosis* by which the human was really absorbed in the divine.⁴⁹ The Cappadocian mysticism

⁴⁵ To hold that intellect itself can sin is to deny the goodness of the intellectual or non-material element, and thus to upset the basic dualism of the (good) intellectual or ideal element and the (bad) material element. The lesson of the Myth of Er is that only he who *knows* can make a wise choice: the responsibility is the chooser's (*αίτια ἔλογένον*), but only the true philosopher can make an absolutely correct decision. It is clear that Plato does not reduce "freedom" to a merely intellectual status (cf. the role of the spirited, *θυμοειδές*, element), but that he certainly minimizes the possibility of any deliberate evil choice.

⁴⁶ Irenaeus' famous doctrine of a progress from *genetic* infancy to *agenetic* perfection (*Adv. Haer.* 4.38.1-3) represents of course a partial acceptance of the Greek dualism. He refuted the Gnostic theory that a material (genetic) creation was the product of an inferior Demiurge by making it the initial stage in a process by which it was to be superseded in an agenetic or quasi-agenetic conclusion of history; but he implicitly agreed with the Gnostics (and Platonists) in seeing the genetic existence as an inferior status. The Fall is basically in Irenaeus the *effect*, not the *cause*, of genetic existence: Adam's infantile state made his sin almost inevitable and God's economy had already discounted it. The basis of Origen's penal view of material creation is obvious.

⁴⁷ Cf. p. 123 *infra*.

⁴⁸ This was really first made clear by Athanasius. Cf. *Oratio contra Arianos* 2.30, 31, 69, 70; *De Synodis* 51 (PG 26.784B).

⁴⁹ Yet the gap had been dangerously narrowed by Origen and, in a different way, by the Irenaeans (Apollinaris). The Homoiousians, by accepting neither the Origenist nor the Apollinarian type of *theosis*, preserved the real distinction.

found its distinctive and original note in its sense of the relation of finite and infinite, its doctrine of the infinite pursuit and of infinite progress in the never completed journey to God.⁵⁰ Yet this very mysticism — this renewed sense of man's creaturely finitude and eternal ascent — was in irreconcilable conflict with the only hypothesis by which sin, in terms of the Platonic dualism, could be understood. For in denying the Origenist explanation of sin, the Cappadocians denied the only intelligible explanation of sin which they knew, or could, on their premises, accept.

And it is, indeed, just this fact which accounts for the marked difference between the Origenist and the Cappadocian mysticism. If we contrast Origen's Homily on the Song of Songs, or his twenty-seventh Homily on Numbers with Nyssa's *Life of Moses* or treatise on the Beatitudes, it becomes clear that what separates and distinguishes the two mysticisms is the fact that one is still largely governed by the omnipresent possibility of temptation and sin, while the other is concerned almost exclusively with the sinless life of the saved or blessed.⁵¹ This difference is really quite as im-

⁵⁰ Perhaps the most striking expression of this idea is to be found in the *De Vita Moysi* (PG 44.403C and following). This passage also illustrates strikingly the extent to which the idea of spiritual progress overcomes any Origenist *koros*. Daniélou *op. cit.* and Balthasar *op. cit.* have described Gregory of Nyssa's doctrine here very adequately. But they write only of Gregory of Nyssa. Yet Gregory of Nazianzus expresses exactly the same idea in his thirty-eighth oration (especially PG 36.317B).

⁵¹ Of the forty-two stations of the "journey" of Israel in this Homily (which of course allegorizes the soul's progress from the earthly to the beatific life), five symbolize temptations not, as might be expected, bunched at the first part of the journey but scattered throughout: thus stations representing temptation occur at stages eight, eighteen, twenty-nine, thirty-three, and forty (only two stages before final beatification). The same emphasis is apparent in the Homilies on the Song of Songs. The bride is always losing sight of the bridegroom: between her first sight of him and the final consummation there is continual and successive finding, loss, and recovery. The quest can succeed, according to Origen, only when *the soul learns to know itself*, that is, *what it is (quid sit ipsa)* and how it is moved (*qualiter moveatur*) or what it is in substance and what are its passions or emotions (*affectibus*: *Comm. in Cant.* 2, p. 143). In other words the soul cannot be safe in its vision of God until it grasps *both* its originally divine nature (as *logikos*) and its tendency to unstable passion. It must know not only its *goal* but the *paths* that keep it from reaching and, above all, *retaining* the goal. Cf. note 11 *supra*.

Quite a different emphasis is revealed in the mystical writings of Gregory of Nyssa. Pivotal here is the famous passage in the eleventh Homily on the Canticles (PG 44.1000D-1001A) in which Gregory describes the soul's progress from the *light*, through the *cloud*, into the *shadow* where God is. God (the bridegroom) is in *shadow* because he remains infinite and unknowable: he gives the soul only a *certain sense of the presence* (*αἴσθησις μὲν . . . τῆς παρουσίας*. PG 44.1001B). This is why the soul's search is infinite also: there is no *finding*, no *possession* and hence no *satiety*. This point is definitively put in the *Vita Moysi*: *οὕτως οὖν πληροῦται τῷ Μωϋσεῖ τὸ ποθούμενον, δι' ὧν ἀπλήρωτος ἡ ἐπιθυμία μένει. Παιδεύεται γὰρ διὰ τῶν εἰρημένων ὅτι τὸ Θεῖον κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν ἀόριστον, οὐδεὶν περιεργόμενον πέρατι. . . . ἀλλὰ πᾶσα πρὸς τὸ καλὸν ἡ ἐπιθυμία ἡ πρὸς τὴν ὄντοδον ἐκείνην ἐφελκομένη ἀεὶ τῷ δρόμῳ τοῦ πρὸς τὸ καλὸν ιεμένον συνεπεκτείνεται· καὶ τοῦτο ἐστιν ὅντως τὸ ἰδεῖν τὸν Θεὸν τὸ μηδέποτε τῆς ἐπιθυμίας κόρον εὑρεῖν.* PG 44.404B-D = *Sources Chrétiennes* (ed. Daniélou). The contrast between Gregory of Nyssa and Origen is perhaps best brought out in their exegesis of *Canticles* 3.1 (*Quaesivi eum*

portant as the different conceptions of the mystical goal — in Origen a kind of static unity, in Gregory of Nyssa a continual progress.⁵² Few recent interpreters, it seems to me, have shown any adequate sense of these differences.

At bottom the Cappadocian and the Origenist systems involve radically divergent conceptions of time.⁵³ In Origen there is no fundamental difference between the *time* of ordinary material living and that of the disembodied or spiritual life of the *logikoi*. But in the Cappadocians the *diastema* or interval of bodily life is quite distinct from that of angelic or spiritual life. Here again the fact that in Origen sin is an eternal possibility and in the Cappadocians a fact of bodily, historical existence (with the inexplicable exception of Satan) accounts for the difference. And does this not explain the relative static quality of Cappadocian mysticism (despite its theoretical progress) compared with that of Origen? In a sense there is a certain abstractness and thinness in, e.g., the *Life of Moses* which we do not find in Origen's mystical homilies. On the other hand, an immense gain in clarity and precision is certainly obtained by the distinct Cappadocian separation of angels from men, or of the historical from the redeemed humanity of the general resurrection: they do not confuse time and eternity as Origen does, but is not their distinction of time and eternity a little too simple?

Yet we cannot comprehend the Cappadocian achievement until we grasp the fact that it did, after all, preserve a vital element of Origenism in the face of both the Irenaean tradition and its relatively crude defenders in the West. To the Sabellian and monophysite emphasis on the mere deification or immortalization of flesh and the consequent loss of both divine and human personality in an essentially physical transformation the Cappadocians opposed not merely trinitarian and christological definitions, but a whole theory of man's salvation. Their emphasis on man as the image of Christ and on his relation to Christ conceived as the image of the Father

et non inventi eum). To Origen (*Hom. Cant.* 1.7, Baehrens, p. 39.20) this is a real loss or lapse (*cum apparuerit meisque fuerit manibus comprehensus, rursus elabitur*): to Gregory it is merely the searching for and finding of a new, greater aspect of the divine (*τι γὰρ ἀν τις μείζον εἰς μακαρισμὸν ἐννοήσειν τοῦ ἰδεῖν τὸν Θεόν; Ἄλλὰ καὶ τοῦτο, τῶν μὲν προδημοσμένων πέρας ἔστι, τῆς δὲ τῶν ὑπερκεμένων ἐλπίδος ἀρχὴ γίνεται.* PG 44.889 C-D). Origen of course sees the goal as complete knowledge (*scientia* or *γνῶσις*): Gregory as the mere *sense of presence* — only a stage in the infinite quest for a *gnosis* that can never be complete and will always remain shadowy. Here Origen is far more neo-Platonic (cf. here the excellent discussion in Daniélou, pp. 48–49 and 208 f.). Yet Daniélou curiously fails to notice the *consequence* of this difference as to *goal* in the actual description of the *quest*: here the difference between Origen and Gregory of Nyssa is quite as pronounced. Gregory of course refers to temptation *en route*, but for him this is never temptation to relapse once the final “shadow” has been entered.

⁵² Cf. note 51 *supra*.

⁵³ Cf. note 65 *infra*.

may seem, at first sight, inconsistent with their opposition of man and God as finite and infinite, or with their acceptance of the one *ousia* in Father and Son. It is true that Basil conceived salvation largely in terms of man as the image, and that Gregory of Nazianzus thought in similar terms, but this way of thinking is, after all, wholly consistent with Gregory's theory of infinite mystical progress. Man's progress toward God is, so to speak, inspired by the image of God in himself as clarified and fortified by Christ. That man is image means that man is creature, not creator, and this fact not even Christ can overcome. Thus to man Christ and the Spirit in him are also images even though they are, from another point of view, God himself. In other words, God is both goal and co-partner in man's infinite approximation to Him.⁵⁴ But the object of man's existence remains the vision and *gnosis* of God which, be it recalled, Clement had once declared⁵⁵ preferable to salvation if *per impossibile* it were ever necessary to choose. This spiritual and in the best sense Platonic conception of salvation or *theosis* is precisely the primary contribution of the second- and third-century Alexandrian school (Clement and Origen) to Christian thought. The Irenaean emphasis was far more physicalist. In elaborating this Alexandrian ideal as against the later and cruder Irenaeism of Marcellus, Apollinaris, and even Athanasius, the Cappadocians saved the Alexandrian spirituality for orthodoxy.⁵⁶ The fact that they thereby became unable to account for sin was due in the last analysis to the rationalist conception of sin as ignorance and the Platonic dualism which they shared with all other Greeks. The Irenaeans were really no different in this respect, since to them, too, mortal, passible flesh was the primary cause of sin. Nonetheless, the Irenaeans would in all likelihood have won, had the Homoiousians and Cappadocians not proved able to dissociate their Alexandrian spirituality from Alexandrian subordinationism and its Arian consequence. We can say in retrospect that Eunomius combined all the defects of Origen with practically none of his merits: he thus became the decisive exhibit of what was dangerous in Origenism — that is, its defective conception of God, and its reduction of Christ to a mere agent and

⁵⁴ Cf. Basil *De Spiritu Sancto*, PG 32, 153A, 137A, 144A. No one, according to Basil, knows God, but his Spirit. But who can know even man's spirit? Thus the Spirit is, in one sense, a *μεσίτης*; in another, God himself. In *Ep.* 234 (Deferrari ed.) Basil refers to the descent of God's *energeiai* while the *ousia* remains unapproachable (*ἀπρόσιτος*). But this *energeia* is not the essence of either Son or Holy Spirit. There are passages (PG 29.648 C-D) where Basil seems to imply that the Son reveals the Father's *ousia*, though his main position seems to be the one set forth above. For a careful study of Gregory of Nyssa's use of *image* (*εικών*) cf. Leys, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ *Stromateis* 4.22: *γνῶσις* is preferable to *σωτηρία* because it is δι' αἰτήν . . . αἰρετή.

⁵⁶ This is also the view of Holl, *op. cit.* 157–158. He thinks three factors (monasticism, the Cappadocians, the Antiochenes) saved Christianity from a narrow “physicalist” or “realist” view of salvation, but that the Cappadocian factor is historically the most important.

creature rather than a true savior. Thus he proved a blessing in disguise by forcing the Alexandrian tradition to a necessary acceptance of Athanasian theology, a concession through which, and through which alone, it was able to keep orthodoxy from the crudities of Irenaeian Christology and anthropology.

Here we come to the most crucial problem associated with the Cappadocians: what was the true origin of their doctrine; of their peculiar defense of Alexandrian spirituality coupled with a denial of Origenism itself? From the Homoiousians they obtained not merely a trinitarian formula (the three *hypostaseis* in one *ousia*), but the basis for their rejection of Eunomius' one-sided and exclusive application of *agenetos*.⁵⁷ We may say that the two great homoiousian manifestoes of Basil of Ancyra and George of Laodicea contain *in nuce* the whole conception of the divine infinity and incomprehensibility which the Cappadocians developed into their theory of mystical progress.⁵⁸ Yet their doctrine of man and angels — their anthropology and angelology — owed little or nothing to the Homoiousians. The Homoiousians did not supply them with any theory of how the Alexandrian spirituality was to be separated from the Alexandrian subordinationism and anthropology. Nor could the Cappadocians, it seems clear, have deduced this directly from Clement and Origen themselves; not to speak of Plotinus or Plato. It seems, in fact, a law of the history of thought that no great thinker of a past generation can be revived except through the medium of subsequent lesser thinkers who provide, so to speak, the channel through which the return to the past can be made. In the case of the Cappadocians and Origen this lesser thinker was the late third-century Bishop of Philippi, Methodius.⁵⁹ It is, indeed, not too much to say that the Cappadocian system is nothing less than a tremendous reworking of Methodius in the light of the Homoiousian theology. This fact has not yet been clearly understood.

Methodius is perhaps the most neglected Patristic figure — that is, neglected in proportion to his actual influence. Nothing fundamental has been done on him since Bonwetsch, though I think we can expect much from the recent research of my former student, Mr. Lloyd Patterson.⁶⁰ I can

⁵⁷ Cp. here the language of the second Homoiousian manifesto (Epiphanius, *Haer.* 73.12-22 = Holl 3, pp. 284.12-295.32) with that of Basil (PG 29.520-534).

⁵⁸ Though only by implication.

⁵⁹ Actually Methodius' episcopal see is not certainly known. Philippi is perhaps the most likely guess (cf. F. Diekamp, "Über den Bischofssitz des hl. . . . Methodius," *Th. Quart.* [1928], 285-308).

⁶⁰ Mr. Patterson is now writing a Columbia doctoral dissertation on Methodius, and I am indebted to him for his illuminating observations as well as for some specific details.

spare time for only the briefest summary here. In effect Methodius has, as is well known, two sides or aspects that may be called Origenist and Irenaean respectively. In the relatively early *Symposium* Methodius repeats a highly allegorized version of Irenaeus' recapitulation theory, but its main burden is an extreme asceticism which is wholly within the Alexandrian tradition, though in some respects a rather crude version of it.⁶¹ In his Treatise on the Resurrection and his *De Creatis*, he expressly attacks Origen (whom he fails to understand at many crucial points),⁶² and upholds particularly the physical resurrection and the unity of man as a body-soul, the latter of which was created *after* the former. Physical death to Methodius was required by the Fall and serves the purpose of cleansing man from original sin.⁶³ True salvation can only be the reunion of a purified soul and body at the General Resurrection.⁶⁴

The link between the spiritualist or ascetic and the physicalist sides of Methodius is to be found in his doctrine of time.⁶⁵ Here he utterly rejected the Origenist conception of time as a homogeneous and eternal process,

⁶¹ The emphasis on virginity in the *Symposium* certainly goes beyond anything in Origen. Cf. especially 1.4 (Christ the chief of virgins) and 8.1 (Virginity [*παρθενία*] is akin to divinity [*παρθεῖα*]).

⁶² Origen is certainly the Centaurus of the *De Creatis*. Yet the arguments of Centaurus reveal an utter failure to comprehend such key Origenist doctrines as the eternal creation and the Origenist use of *genetos*.

⁶³ Cf. *De Resurrectione*, ed. Bonwetsch, pp. 280.1–282.2 (1.38).

⁶⁴ *De Resurrectione* p. 307.2–3.

⁶⁵ The Methodian view of time is most clearly set forth in the *De Resurrectione* 2.25 (Bonwetsch 382). Methodius speaks of three *diastemata* of time (past, present, future) which will cease with the *aeon* of the Resurrection wherein there will be no past and future (ἢ αἰώνι γὰρ οὐτε παρώχηκε τι οὐτε μέλλει, ἀλλὰ μόνον ὑφέστηκεν). As Balthasar supposes (*op. cit.* 6–7, note 1) the Stoic *diastema* (the interval of cosmic motion, cf. Simplicius in *Categ.*, ed. Kalbfleisch [1907], p. 350) was applied by Plotinus to the life of the soul (cf. Ennead 3.7, 11, 41) and represents a certain uneasy separation from the timeless, unbroken *νόος*. Origen, however, though he separates the presentness of God's eternity from all ordinary temporality (*Peri Archon* 4.4.1 = Koetschau, p. 350.23) does not distinguish the time of the pure *logikoi* from that of men on earth. He posits (*De Oratione* 27.13–15 = Koetschau, 2 pp. 372–374) a series of *aeons* or long stretches of time which succeed each other in regular temporal sequence. Whether he believed in a final *aeon* in which all would be redeemed and stay redeemed is very uncertain and depends mainly upon our interpretation of a text in his Commentary on Romans (see note 13 *supra*). He does not refer to *diastema* or *diastasis* as a definition of time. Yet, as we have seen (note 35 *supra*), the Cappadocians use *diastema* or *diastasis* as the indication of *human* or *sinful* time (cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Mortuis* PG 46.521 AB, *De Opificio* 44.165 A–C). At the resurrection or *apokatastasis* this will be replaced by the angelic *aeon* (time with no past). Methodius was clearly forced to forego the Origenist time (in which "sin" or the "fall" is endemic throughout eternity or the *aeons*) since he repudiated any creation of souls prior to bodies. The distinction between human *diastemic* time and the *aeon* or eternity of the Resurrection thus expresses the difference between the sensual and sinful character of existence on earth after the Fall (in the "coats of skin") and the non-sensual, virginal character of the life after the Resurrection. So the distinctness of time and eternity (confused by Origen) is again made clear. In effect Methodius here reverts to Plotinus. There can be no doubt that the Cappadocians followed his example.

broken, to be sure, by phases of lapsing and falling or by great *aeons* (in the sense of very long periods of time), but still time as we ordinarily conceive it in actual life on earth. Rather, Methodius conceived the time of earthly, historical existence in terms of the Stoic interval or *diastema* — an interval between a definite beginning and end; characterized of course by the usual trinity of past, present, and future — which, at the eschaton, would be abolished. Eternity in contrast is *adiastemic*, and has no true past, present, or future. It is the “time” or time-equivalent of angels, of resurrected mankind, and of the Deity. To Methodius mankind is really an organic unity each of whose parts — individual men — is essential to its perfection. Thus there will be a time when enough souls will have been born to have completed the Unity and enable the *diastema* to end and be superseded by eternity.⁶⁶ It can be seen that in such a system, the separation of time and eternity (*diastema* and *aeon* in Methodius’ terminology) corresponds to the separation of sin and sinlessness, or of the sinful, historical existence since the Fall (when man, in Methodius’ words, assumed a mortal body, the “coats of skin”), and sinless, eternal existence after the General Resurrection. Logically this system would seem to require universal salvation (as it did in Gregory of Nyssa), though here Methodius was not so logical.

It can be seen at once how Methodius has repudiated the Origenist conception of sin as spiritual satiation, and has reverted, in fact, to a simple dualism. It is not of course a dualism of body and soul as such, but rather a dualism of historical (*diastemic*) man and post-Resurrection or post-*diastemic* man. Yet we must not be deceived by this apparent physicalism. Actually the distinction between historical and eternal existence in Methodius is, in essentials, identical with the older Platonic dualism of body and soul, or pure form and matter. The body is saved in a material sense, but it is a body so spiritualized as to be for all effects and purposes identical with soul in the more strictly Platonic conception. He certainly diverges radically from Apollinarius and crude physicalism in his insistence upon the soul as a fundamental element in man.⁶⁷

We can now see how deeply indebted to Methodius the Cappadocians, particularly Gregory of Nyssa, actually were. In effect their whole conception of time and their equation of salvation with the overcoming of historical time and existence is Methodian. However, it was in their doctrine of man’s spiritual life as infinite progress that they revolutionized Methodius’ rather crude asceticism, and of course, in this revolution, the Homoiousian and

⁶⁶ Cf. here especially *Symposium* 2.1.

⁶⁷ Cf. *De Resurrectione* 1.34.4 (Bonwetsch, p. 272.8–9), also *ibid.* 1.51.5 (Bonwetsch, p. 307.2–3).

Athanasian influence and the great reaction against Eunomius played, as we have seen, the fundamental rôles.

Methodius in fact was, in his theology, a virtual Arian, and in his *De Creatis* went far to anticipate the propositions of Aetius about the logical antithesis of *genetos* and *agenetos*.⁶⁸ I think a fair case can be made for holding Methodius to be the true precursor of Lucian and Arius, though I am not concerned to argue it here.⁶⁹ What is clear, at any rate, is that he had no influence on the Cappadocian theology (narrowly defined) or, therefore, on their whole conception of mystical progress.

Furthermore, in interpreting Methodius, the Cappadocians returned to Origen and Clement, and sometimes to Plotinus and Plato. Gregory of Nazianzus' use of Clement's doctrine of the divine infinity and, indeed, the pronounced influence of Clementine mysticism on all the Cappadocians are quite independent of and even decidedly alien to Methodius' whole point of view. Again it is clear that the Cappadocian conception of sin is far closer to Origen than to Methodius.⁷⁰ Methodius' crude notion that death *per se* cleanses man of sin, and his concomitant failure to perceive that bodily existence constitutes a real problem for the Christian conception of God's perfection (so long as sin is mainly derived from the ignorance which bodily passion induces)⁷¹ were, of course, indices of his mental inferiority to both Origen and the Cappadocians. Methodius never appreciated the problem that Gregory of Nyssa set out to solve in the *De Opificio*.

Yet how much Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and, most of all, Gregory of Nyssa did finally owe to this really second-rate thinker! However, they were indebted to him not for any sort of Irenaeism — in the sense that we can call Marcellus, Apollinaris, or even Athanasius Irenaeans — but rather for the tools with which to combat the cruder physicalism of the Irenaeans. Methodius showed them how to defend the body without denying the spiritual life.

Above all, he showed them how to define and establish the distinction of time and eternity. This crucial distinction is indeed the major difference between the Origenist and the Cappadocian view of creation. On the one hand, it admirably fitted the new Athanasian and anti-Eunomian concep-

⁶⁸ Cf. *De Creatis* 7.51 (Bonwetsch, p. 498.16–21) and *De Autexousio* 4.2 (Bonwetsch, p. 155.10).

⁶⁹ Cf. *Symposium* 8.9 (Bonwetsch, p. 91.4–14) and *De Creatis* 11 (Bonwetsch, pp. 498.32–499.15) with Arius (Opitz, *Athanasius Werke* 3.1, Urkunde 1, p. 1).

⁷⁰ Even though Gregory of Nyssa follows Methodius (*De Resurrectione*) in the Catechetical Oration. Yet Gregory does not think of physical death as removing sin.

⁷¹ Methodius (*De Resurrectione* 1.38 = Bonwetsch, pp. 280.1–282.2) treats the Fall as due to the devil's clever arguments and man's own free will, but Adam is characteristically thought of as a schoolboy who needs corrective whipping (death).

tion of the Trinity and the anti-mediatorial conception of Christ; on the other hand, it constituted the central flaw or incoherence of the Cappadocian system — that which established a fundamental cleavage between the Cappadocian theology and the Cappadocian angelology and anthropology. The infinity of God opens to angels and all redeemed spirits a prospect of infinite, beneficent progress in knowledge and holiness and love. But these spirits are in eternity, not in time. If time, then, is the proper and only comprehensible locus of sin, we can understand neither the sin of angels (Satan) nor of man in any hypothecated quasi-angelic state. We cannot understand them, nor can we even admit them to be possible without denying either God's absolute goodness in creation or without altering the entire Cappadocian or Hellenic view of sin.

What seems so astounding to us now is that the Latin Christian West, or at any rate Augustine, had already gone far toward solving this problem without any comprehension of its status in the Greek East. In fact the majority of Latin Christians seem only to have abetted the Irenaean side at its crudest. It can be said that if Athanasius long remained blind to the heretical character of Marcellus and Apollinarius, the West remained even more blind. By and large Rome continued to back Alexandria in even its worst and most outré undertakings. We need only recall the extraordinary performance of the famous council of Serdika, the refusal of the Pope to help Basil in clearing up the Meletian question at Antioch, the intrigues of Lucifer of Cagliari, and the really infamous abetting of the Alexandrian plot against Nazianzus at Constantinople. Much of this it may be said was mere ecclesiastical politics, but it revealed, none the less, an appalling lack of understanding of major philosophical and theological issues. The fact is that in the late fourth century the ideological gap between East and West had become very wide indeed. Augustine, it now seems quite clear, read no Greek until his later years, and even then without much understanding.⁷² Ambrose certainly read much Greek including both Athanasius and Basil, but he, even more notably than Augustine, quite failed to assimilate its real import. Jerome also read Greek but, still more than Ambrose, was wholly negligible as a theologian. His famous quarrel with Rufinus, a very unedifying episode, ended only in such a passion to demonstrate his orthodoxy that he quite lost sight of whatever theological understanding he may originally have possessed. On the other hand, the East seems to have had virtually no comprehension of either Latin or Latin Christian thought. In the whole period between Origen and the Cappadocians the only important instance of a Latin influencing a Greek Christian writer is the effect

⁷² Cf. G. Bardy, *La question des langues dans L'Église ancienne*, I (1948), pp. 196–202.

of Tertullian upon Methodius, and even that is of quite secondary importance.⁷³

Yet in fact the West was then approaching a solution of the problem which is so conspicuously unsolved in the Cappadocian system of thought. In a word, the West was able to establish a distinction of time and eternity which was thoroughly consistent with its conception of human nature and of sin. Even as early as the late second century, Tertullian had quite gone beyond the ignorance theory of sin and had also developed that psychological and introspective method of self-analysis through which a far deeper and far more biblical understanding of sin could be attained. This method finally triumphed in Augustine's *Confessions*. We see, for example, in his diagnosis of the famous pear-robbing incident how a truly experiential self-analysis can lead to a far more profound insight into sin. There the statement with which he summarized his conclusion (*Confessions* 2.7): "I loved evil solely because it was evil" is to be juxtaposed to the statement of Gregory of Nyssa that "Man could not have been deceived by overt evil."⁷⁴ The difference between the two outlooks is really profound. We can find it in another way by comparing the *Confessions* with Nazianzus' autobiographical poems. These are not merely inferior *qua* literature to Augustine's work; they utterly lack any vestige of that inwardness through which Augustine became aware of the nature and meaning of sin as a deliberate choice of the lesser good and thus a deliberate rebellion against God, the Best. The center and origin of sin is, therefore, not bodily at all but spiritual; for Augustine sin is not fundamentally ignorance resulting from fleshly passion, but a knowing misuse and corruption of both soul and flesh. This is why time can be contrasted with eternity without conceiving either to be unique loci of sin or sinlessness (infinite progress). Satan's rebellion is no problem, nor *a fortiori* is man's. On the other hand the interval of time or earthly history is now conceived far more dynamically. Instead of being the period requisite for producing the perfect number of souls (as Gregory of Nyssa had held in the *De Opificio*),⁷⁵ it becomes the interval of the divine-human drama of fall, redemption, and eschatological triumph.

Yet, though we can now see the points of congruence between Gregory

⁷³ I owe the details here to Mr. Lloyd Patterson. There are many parallels which place beyond doubt the fact that Methodius knew Tertullian (especially the *adversus Hermogenem*, the *de Monogamia*, the *de Resurrectione*). The only important single influence of Tertullian on Methodius seems to be that of *adv. Hermog.* 19 on *de Creatis* 11.3 (Bonwetsch, p. 499.9 ff.).

⁷⁴ *De Opificio* 20 (PG 44.200C): οὐ γὰρ ἀν ἡπατήθη ὁ ἀνθρωπος τῷ προδήλῳ κακῷ.

⁷⁵ *De Opificio* 22 (PG 44.205A-D).

of Nyssa and Augustine — the way in which Augustine's conception of sin gives coherence to the Methodian conception of the *diastema* — we must finally recognize that East and West were really dealing with utterly different and seemingly irreconcilable realms of discourse. The Platonic dualism and the Socratic identification of sin and error were meaningful and intellectually necessary to the one and were but dimly understood by the other. The God of the Christian Tertullian was not the God of the Greek philosophers — what had Athens to do with Jerusalem? — and Augustine, despite all his often-invoked Platonism, was here far closer to Tertullian than to Origen or the Cappadocians.

On the other hand, we must not make the easy but fatal error of thinking of Cappadocian Christianity as but another of the fatal "hellenizations" of the Gospel. Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa were first and primarily Christians, and only secondarily and subsequently Platonists. The question of where and how their Christianity asserted itself over their Platonism would be the subject of quite another paper far longer and more complex than this. I may be pardoned here for a final *obiter dictum* to the effect that the Christian Platonism of the Cappadocians represents perhaps more of a feeling for important aspects of the Christian *agape* (even as described by Paul) than we can find in the relative violence and much lauded "activism" of the West. There is an unpleasant ferocity in Tertullian, and even in Augustine, which is, on the whole, lacking in the Cappadocians. More positively there is an *agape* in the Platonic *eros* of Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa — also in Origen — which is neither Platonism nor Augustinianism. Those who merely contrast *eros* with *agape*, finding the latter almost exclusively on the Western side, have committed, I think, a great error, important as is the general truth to which they point. So it is, or so it seems to me, a fact that to both the Latin Augustine and the Greek Cappadocians much, though not the whole, Christian truth can be accorded.